

## SIR RICHARD BURTON

BY DAVIS L. JAMES, JR.

**D**ESPITE the precarious situation of the royal fortunes, the private life of Louis XIV, "le grand monarque", continued to be, as indeed it had always been, one of luxury and licentiousness. His queen had long since ceased to interest him, and although the astute and brilliant Mme. de Montespan still swayed his intellectual activities, time had loosened her hold upon his affections. The sombre star of Mme. de Maintenon had not yet risen on Louis' horizon, and, in consequence, the royal intimacies were more or less promiscuously bestowed among the beauties of his court circle.

Of all this charming galaxy of women, perhaps the most delightful was the young and beautiful Countess of Montmorency, a member of the great house of that name that had bulked so large in the reign of France's earlier kings. On her the affections of the already jaded monarch seem for a brief moment to have rested, for when she quite unexpectedly gave birth to a son, there was little doubt in her mind—or in the collective mind of court circles—as to the child's royal parentage.

As the tale is told, "La Belle Montmorency" had leanings toward the Protestant Church, and fearing lest her son should be brought up in the Church of Rome, she reluctantly determined to send him abroad. Accordingly he was carefully packed in a basket of flowers and spirited away, leaving the court quite undisturbed. As for the royal sire, it is not stated that he ever acknowledged the child's existence.

After some wanderings and vicissitudes of which we have no record the child was landed in Ireland under the name of Louis Dreincourt Le Jeune. There he was received into the bosom of a

respectable family who undertook his care and education. He grew up in Protestant piety, changed his name to Young, and became, in due time, a rector in the Anglican Church.

Years came and went; his family prospered, and the Bourbon irregularity that had brought him into the world was forgotten, cloaked in the veil of propriety. So well concealed had been his identity, that a few years sufficed to efface the memory of his origin from the pious minds of his descendants. But it is a significant fact that the pear-shaped Bourbon head continued to make its appearance in their midst for several generations.

On March nineteenth, 1821, there was born at Torquay, Ireland, a baby boy with fiery red hair and a pear-shaped head. The father, Joseph Netterville Burton, was the third son of one Rev. Edward Burton, Rector of Tuam,—scion of an old English family in whose veins flowed a strong stream of Romany blood,—and Maria Margareta Campbell, a granddaughter of Louis le Jeune. The child's mother, Maria Beckworth Baker, was a lineal descendant of the Scotch marauder Rob Roy. In due time the boy was baptised in the Parish Church at Elstree and named Richard Francis Burton.

Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Netterville Burton, who had been invalided from the army some years before, was a sufferer from bronchial asthma and his life was spent travelling about Europe in search of climates that afforded temporary relief from his trouble. After Richard's birth he settled for a few years at Tours, in the Chateau de Beauséjour, overlooking the Loire, and here were born a brother and a sister, Katherine Eliza in 1823, and Edward Joseph Netterville in 1824.

The children grew up with little education and no discipline, and after an unsuccessful attempt to place them in a boarding school at Richmond Green, they resumed the nomadic Continental life of their father under the tutelage of a bull-necked and stolid individual named Du Pré.

Their wanderings now took them to Italy, and the boys ranged over the country much as they pleased. They learned to know and to love its monuments, its language, and its people, but they were growing more unruly day by day. They were continually getting into difficulties, and Du Pré could no longer do anything with them. Both big strapping youngsters they were perpetually playing tricks

on their unfortunate tutor, who, as he could not manage them, fell in with their ways and learned to enjoy their forbidden pastimes as much as his pupils.

The roving life continued until 1840, but it was suddenly brought to a close when the two young miscreants were caught in an unsavory amorous adventure. They were soundly horse whipped, but Colonel Burton was made at last to realize that it was time for his sons to enter college and prepare for their life's work. After due consideration it was decided that they should study for the clergy. To this they both objected violently, as their hearts were set on Army careers, but the Colonel was adamant and off they were sent, Richard to enter Oxford and Edward to Cambridge.

Richard was just nineteen, a tall well-built fellow, his red hair now turned jet black, and with a huge drooping moustache of which he was inordinately proud. Though he spoke French, Italian, and modern Greek, it must be admitted that his education had been hardly suitable for one contemplating Holy Orders. He did not know what was meant by the Apostles Creed, and it is probable that he had never heard of the Thirty-nine Articles. But he was determined not to be worsted by the examinations, and after three or four months of coaching and hard work, he was able to enter Trinity College in October, 1840.

As might be expected he detested Oxford life and found the smug Dons and the tedious lectures almost unendurable. The only lecturer to whom he would listen was Newman, then Vicar at St. Mary's, and afterwards Cardinal.

Though possessed of a brilliant mind, Burton had no interest in his studies, and only the relaxation afforded by sports and athletics enabled him to continue with what, to him, was a dreary grind. He made a reputation for himself as an expert fencer and broadswordsmen, and learned to wield the quarterstaff with deadly effect. He was possessed of herculean strength and a quick and ungovernable temper, a combination which got him into innumerable broils, but eventually made him both feared and respected.

For the rest, he got drunk often, became the owner of a beautiful bull dog, and fell in love with Selina, a pretty gypsy girl who told fortunes in Bagley Wood. From her he gleaned a smattering of the Romany tongues, and thus began an interest in her race that lasted throughout his life.

Two attempts to win classical scholarships having resulted in dismal failure, Richard decided to direct his efforts into other channels. Secretly determined, as he was, to enter the Colonial Service, he made up his mind to study Arabic. He met with little encouragement from the authorities, for though there was a Regius professor in the subject, that gentleman haughtily informed him that he was there to teach a class and not an individual. Burton, being the only one who had applied for the course, was forced to learn for himself, and this he did with considerable success. Before he left college he had labored through most of the texts available to his hand.

For a year and a half Richard struggled on with his studies, but in April 1842, he felt that the time had come to bring his education to a close. Time was flying and the age for military eligibility would soon be passed. As Colonel Burton was still obstinate in his determination to make churchmen of his sons, the two of them took matters into their own hands and had themselves simultaneously rusticated for deliberate infraction of college rules.

Great was Colonel Burton's disappointment on hearing of his sons' conduct, but realizing that there was no further hope of their entering the service of the Church, he resigned himself to his fate and purchased them commissions in the Army. Richard was assigned to the 18th Bombay Infantry, and Edward, at his own request, was sent to study medicine.

On June 18th, 1840, Burton set sail from Greenwich with his bull terrier and his Arabic text books. On the voyage out, which lasted over four months, he applied himself diligently to his studies, and with the help of a native member of the crew, he made considerable progress in Hindustani. Affairs in India were in great confusion. Sir William McNaughten had just been murdered and the young officers on board were filled with heroic visions of avenging his death, to their own and England's glory. Great was their disappointment when they landed at Bombay, in October, to learn that the uprising had been subdued and the prestige of British arms restored.

After a stay of six weeks in Bombay, which he devoted to further study of Hindustani, under the guidance of an aged Parsee Priest, Burton hired a brace of Goanese servants and embarked in a native craft to join his regiment at Baroda. Here he divided

his time between his studies and the drill ground, sometimes devoting twelve hours a day to Hindustani. Except for his linguistic work, he lived the life of the average Indian Officer. As was the custom (and one that he always afterwards defended)—among his brothers in arms, he took a native mistress or “bubu”. No doubt he used the relationship to better advantage than his fellows, for from her he learned much of the language and customs of the people.

Languages now became his chief interest in life and he devoted himself to them with unprecedented vigor. In May, 1843, he returned to Bombay to be examined in Hindustani. He passed with honor, and in August was back again for examination in Gujarati, again receiving high commendation. He now made a study of Hinduism, learning many of the sacred books by heart, and passing much of his time in the temples with the native priests, who eventually permitted him to wear the Brahminical thread. With infinite pains he had acquired the mastery of Sanskrit so necessary to the pursuit of these aims.

Despite his accomplishments and his unquestioned ability, Burton was never popular with the officers of his regiment. Their mistrust of him, perhaps for his uncanny aptitude at disguise and his ability to master the native dialects and mannerisms, led them to dub him the “white nigger.” He idolized old Sir Charles Napier, and his violent defense of his hero against Sir William Outram, who at that time held the upper hand, estranged him from the board of governors, whom he had grown to despise. Above all, though fair in his dealings with everyone, he was woefully hot-headed and lacking in tact.

Burton’s knowledge of native tongues now procured him an interesting position as assistant to Capt. Scott, a nephew of the novelist, on a survey of Sind. The work was trying, but relieved by occasional hunting trips and periods of inactivity occasioned by inclement weather. He used these leisure moments to good advantage. With the assistance of native acquaintances he opened a bazaar, which he conducted in disguise, at no great monetary advantage to himself, as he would always give pretty women extra value for their money, except when, to use his own words, “he cheated them just to make them argue with him”. At other times he purchased small stocks of trinkets, sweetmeats, and silks, and

wandered about from house to house as an itinerant merchant. Sometimes he was turned away, but more often he was admitted to observe the domestic manners of the people. He dived into magic of various hues, and became versed in the mysteries of oriental philosophy.

On one of these visits Burton came to know an olive-skinned Persian beauty of noble descent, whose "eyes were narcissi, and whose cheeks sweet basil." Charmed with her low musical voice and here sweet disposition, no less than by her physical graces, he fell deeply in love with her. She was as good as she was beautiful, and he would certainly have married her, and taken her back to England, but hardly had he learned that his passion was reciprocated, when her tragic death put an end to his romance. Nor does he seem ever to have forgotten her. Despite his many subsequent amorous affairs and the more sober conjugal affection of his later days, he could never speak of her without emotion, and to those who know the story her spirit may still be seen wandering through the sombre stanzas of the *Kasidah*.

About this time occurred an event destined to exert a baleful influence upon Burton's entire career. Sir Charles Napier had been informed that Karachi was the hot-bed of an unnatural vice, which seemed indigenous to certain geographical regions, and that, though a town of not more than two thousand souls, it supported at least three houses consecrated to its service. Determined to stamp out the evil, or more likely to satisfy his own curiosity, the General at once cast about for someone to make a report of the conditions. Because of his unusual linguistic accomplishments and his skill at disguise, Burton was requested to make the investigation. Realizing the disastrous effects upon his reputation should the report reach certain high authorities, he accepted only on condition that it be not forwarded to the Bombay government,—a condition to which Sir Charles readily agreed. Accordingly, disguised as a merchant and accompanied by three native cronies, Burton made the required visits, and in due time rendered, in writing, a lurid and detailed report of his findings. They quite surpassed all expectations, and for those who are curious, the material gathered may be found in the terminal essay to the *Arabian Nights*, published forty years later.

All was well as long as Sir Charles remained at his post, but

when he quitted Sind in 1847, he unfortunately left behind him the ill-fated report. This, together with other items, found its way to Bombay, where it produced the expected result. A friend afterwards informed Burton that his summary dismissal had been demanded by one of Napier's successors, but official modesty, outraged though it was, shrank from such drastic measures, and the irate Puritan was not permitted to have his way. However, the report, and rumors that grew out of it, were held against Burton throughout his official life.

In the meantime Burton's bad temper and lack of tact had embroiled him with nearly all of his superiors, and the ensuing worry, together with grief over the death of his Persian enamorata, resulted in a physical break-down. The Bombay Government, no doubt with a sigh of relief at the prospect of temporarily shelving their troublesome genius, granted him two years sick leave, in February 1847.

As soon as he was able to be about, Burton set off for Goa, the former haunt of his beloved Camoëns. With a copy of the "Lusiads" in his pocket, he went over the ground celebrated by that remarkable Portuguese traveller in his immortal poem. In the bitterness of his early disappointments—for he was now but twenty-six—Burton liked to compare himself with that unfortunate Portugingal who three hundred years before, had fallen under the strange orient spell that he himself felt so poignantly, and who, after more than thirty years of wandering, had returned at length to his native land, to die in poverty and obscurity. Burton's translation of the *Lusiads* probably was commenced at this period, but it did not see print until nearly forty years later.

His leave up, Burton returned to Sind, where he passed with highest honors in the examinations in Persian and was awarded a prize of one thousand rupees, by the court of directory. He had lately conceived the idea of some day making a pilgrimage to Mecca, and as his old ophthalmia prevented him from continuing his survey work, he gave himself up to the study of Moslem divinity, learned much of the Koran by heart, and became proficient at prayer. Gradually he drifted into the cult of Sufism, and by dint of plain living, lofty thinking, and generally stifling the impulses of his nature, he became a master Sufi.

Now came the news of the serious outbreak in Mooltan. Bur-

ton being already officially accredited with six oriental languages, presented himself for the post of interpreter to the expedition, with high hopes of success. But the luckless Karachi report was dragged out against him, and official morality being more necessary than linguistic ability, a man was appointed who knew but one language besides English.

Rage and disappointment at such treatment, coupled with a fresh onset of his old trouble, resulted in a complete break-down, and he returned to Bombay a physical wreck. He was carried on board the ship "Eliza", bound for England, with his servant Allahdad and the doctor's assurance that he would certainly never live to see his native land. However, the fresh sea air and Allahdad's efficient nursing brought back his ebbing strength, and when he landed at Plymouth in the spring of 1849, his health was completely restored.

After a brief stay in England at the home of his aunt, he set out with Allahdad to see his parents who were once more sojourning in Pisa. With them he revisited the haunts of his boyhood, Verona, Brindisi, Sorrento, Florence, Reggio and Ferrara—each recalling some adventurous or romantic escapade of those delightful days when he and his brother Edward had roamed the countryside together. His pleasure was marred only by the depraved conduct of his servant Allahdad. That worthy Eastern had conceived an inerradicable hatred of all Italians, a feeling that he took no pains to conceal. This unfortunate aversion culminated in a knifing affair serious enough to result in Allahdad's being deported to his native land, much to his master's relief.

The year 1850 was passed in England in a round of amusements, flirtations, and social activities, and 1851 found Burton back again on the continent, this time at Boulogne, engaged in the writing and publication of several books, grown out of his Indian experience: *Goa and the Blue Mountains*, *Sind*, in two volumes; *Falconry in the Valley of the Indus*, and *A System of Bayonet Exercise*. This last book, it is interesting to note, became the basis of all bayonet systems in use in Europe up to the World War. Burton was the first to realize the real effectiveness of the bayonet as an offensive weapon, and the first to insist on systematic training in its use. He had given the book much thought and hoped that the War Office would tender him some word of acknowledgement.



It came in due time—an official looking document with much tape and many seals—informing him that he would be permitted to draw upon Her Majesty's Treasury for the sum of one shilling. The evil genius of Karachi was still pursuing him.

Existence at Boulogne was a leisurely affair. The social life was far from brilliant, but it filled in agreeably the moments snatched from literary work and sports. Burton had always been fond of sword play, and here, under the tutelage of Monsieur Constantin, Maître d'Armes, he received his "brevet de pointe". Indeed he was the most proficient swordsman of his day, and his skill was afterwards to stand him in good stead.

Love of a sort mingled with literary endeavors. Flirtations succeeded one another with no serious thought of marriage. One affair, however, seemed really to be of a more promising nature. The young lady was progressing beautifully, until, unfortunately for her, there hove into view a ponderous and elephantine matron, whom she addressed as mother. The sight of this veritable caricature and the thought that her now lovely daughter might one day come to such a state, so dampened Richard's ardor that when the worthy lady thought best to question him regarding his intentions toward her, he replied with his most ferocious air, "Strictly dishonorable, madam."

Two friendships were formed in this period that were destined to be of vital importance in Burton's life: one with F. F. Arbuthnot, the collaborator in much of his later literary work and the closest friend of his declining years; the other with Isabel Arundell, his future wife.

Miss Arundell was the descendant of an old and aristocratic family of English Catholics. Her parents, though not wealthy, were well-to-do, and moved in the best and most influential society. Isabel herself, at the time just turned twenty, was indeed a fine looking woman, tall and imposing, with large dark eyes and a magnificent head of auburn hair. Her education, however, was woefully deficient, and her devout Catholicism had led her into bypaths of superstition that were at times amusing. She believed in all sorts of signs and tokens, and once, in her girlhood days, a gypsy fortune-teller named Hagar Burton, had informed her that she would one day marry a man of that name, and that she would meet him after a journey at sea.

Richard and Isabel had encountered each other from time to time in their walks about the city. He had turned to admire her as he would any pretty woman, but she, in her romantic way, had fallen in love with him without even knowing who he was, and when he was finally presented to her and she learned his name, the memory of Hagar Burton's prophecy came back to her with all its force. "That", she said to herself, "is the man" and she resolved forthwith to marry *him* or no one at all. Though deeply in love, she never allowed herself to attempt to attract his attention, and when he left Boulogne, he had forgotten her completely. Not so Isabel. Her thoughts followed him continually, and she was always convinced that it was the power of her prayers that brought him safely through the adventures and hardships of the next few years of his life.

Nearly four years had elapsed since his return from India, and Burton was beginning to grow restless. In his own words, "the power of the hills" was upon him, and he felt that he could not long resist their call. The long cherished desire to visit Mecca, the aim of all his oriental studies, now returned with such force that he determined to make the attempt at all costs. At length he obtained a year's leave to "pursue his Arabic studies in lands where the language is best learned", and immediately began to make preparations for his journey. His final plan was to visit Al Medinah and Mecca in pilgrim guise, in emulation of the great Swiss traveller, Burckhardt.

Accordingly he set out for London, where with characteristic thoroughness, he prepared himself for the part he was to play by reading medicine and learning to shoe horses. When all was in readiness he left abruptly, without any farewells. This was one of his peculiarities, for in his many-sided nature was an emotional streak that made it very difficult for him to say good-bye to those dear to him.

Space makes it impossible to describe this remarkable journey in detail. It may be read in Burton's own book. *A Pilgrimage to Al Medinah and Mecca*. Whatever one may say of its literary value, it is a remarkable record of achievement. One fares with him, first to Alexandria, where he lived in an out-house attached to the dwelling of a friend, as Mirza Abdullah, a Persian dervish. Then to Cairo with Haji Wali, where he becomes an Afghan Doc-

tor whose rough but effective measures soon won him a great reputation, and whose prescriptions all began "In the name of Allah, the compassionate, the merciful; and blessings and praise be upon our Lord the Apostle". The amusing incident of the Abyssinian slave girls, whom he cured of the price-lowering habit of snoring, and whose master, in gratitude, unfolded to him the mysteries of the slave trade. The drinking bout with the Albanian Captain, which ended when the captain passed into a state of coma, and that nearly ruined Burton's reputation for piety. The huge star sapphire he hung about his neck as a talisman against ill luck and as a pledge of faith.

And then the hurried departure for Suez. The motley pilgrim throng, Saad the Demon, black as the ace of spades, Shaykh Hamid; dirty, but dignified and aristocratic; Mohammed, the loquacious Meccan boy; and Burton's servant the thievish and rascally Nur. At last the departure on the filthy sambuk, "Golden Wire", the fight with the Maghrabis, the almost unendurable heat and dirt of the voyage, ending after twelve days, at Yambu, the port of Al Medinah.

And then the march of one hundred and thirty miles, through predatory Bedawin tribes to the Sacred City, where hangs, midway between heaven and earth, the body of Mohammed. Ten days of comparative quiet and comfort, of prayer and holy visitations. Ten days of tense excitement lest some insignificant slip disclose his imposture and expose him to the fantastical pilgrims as an infidel:—and the caravan departs for Mecca.

Now it passes the sacred Wady Laymun, where the pious pilgrim shaves his head and puts on clean garments. At last the Holy City appears, cradled in a valley below, greeted with cries of "Meccah, the Sanctuary, labbayk, here am I." The Kaabah, that weird, mysterious erection, the bourne of his long and weary pilgrimage, the place of answered prayer, above which sits Allah himself, drawing his pen through the sins of mankind. With him one visits the holy places, kisses the sacred stone, drinks at the well of Zem-Zem, and stones the devil. At length, the fifty-five holy places having been duly visited, one departs for Jeddah, the sea-port of Meccah, there to pause at the tomb of Eve. Finally, aboard the English vessel, "Dwarka":—the pilgrimage is over.

This exploit made Burton's name a household word in Eng-

land. His book was read with wonder and delight upon its appearance, and had he possessed the good sense to return to London immediately, he might have been the lion of the hour. Instead he remained in Cairo, resting up from his exertions and amusing himself until his leave was up, and when he eventually landed in England his adventure was half-forgotten.

Burton now enjoyed an enormous, though a somewhat unenviable reputation. He had fought more enemies single-handed than any man of his time and was known in the Army as Ruffian Dick. Like Lord Byron, he delighted in shocking people and enjoyed nothing more than reciting harrowing stories of the crimes he had committed. He boasted openly of his descent from Louis XIV, and often remarked that he would rather be the bastard of a king than the son of an honest but mediocre man. But one is tempted to suspect that much of his villainy was entirely fictitious, and his braggadocio a mask to cover a nature at once mystical and the least bit sentimental.

In October, 1854, Burton returned to Bombay in Arab guise. Here, with the exploring fever still hot in his veins, he obtained permission to explore Somaliland, that great parched horn that juts out into the Red Sea, with the hitherto unvisited city of Harrar as his particular objective. The protests of his old enemy, Sir William Outram, who regarded the affair as a tempting of providence, proved unavailing, and he set out for Aden with Lieutenants Speke, Herne, and Stroyan, as assistants. His plan was to visit Harrar, via Zeila, and then to make for Berbera where the others were to remain and produce a favorable effect upon the Somali, thus facilitating his egress from Harrar, should he succeed in reaching that city.

Posing as an Arab merchant, he gathered together a party of some thirty souls, headed by a scoundrelly Moslem priest, yclept "The End of Time," and having purchased supplies and pack animals, he set out bravely for the mysterious city, within whose walls no European had, till then, set foot.

A full account of this daring adventure may be read in *First Footsteps in East Africa*, perhaps Burton's most vivacious and readable book. Suffice it to say that the party, or rather that part of it that did not mutiny and desert, eventually reached Harrar, after a wearisome journey. Burton walked boldly into the town

and virtually bearded the Emir in his den. They were received with civility, but were confined within the city walls for ten days. Though treated with apparent courtesy, throughout their stay they were at the mercy of the cold-blooded and treacherous ruler, and it was with a distinct feeling of relief that they quitted Harrar, to turn their faces once more toward the Red Sea.

On their way back, the pusillanimous "End of Time" and most of the deserters were retrieved, and Burton was emboldened to head straight for Berbera. He had miscalculated the difficulties of the march and the journey was a nightmare. Twice the water supply gave out, and the party reached the squalid seaport exhausted and minus most of the pack animals. Here Burton found his friends, Speke, Herne and Stroyan anxiously awaiting him, and the four returned together to Aden.

Unable to let well enough alone, Burton now determined to make a new exploration, this time to the Nile, by way of Berbera and Harrar. Accordingly, he returned to Berbera in April, 1855, in a British gunboat, taking with him Speke, Herne, and Stroyan. They proceeded to establish a base on the coast, in case it became necessary to beat a retreat, but hardly had the work commenced, before the authorities at Aden saw fit to withdraw the gunboat. This awe-inspiring vessel had no more than disappeared when the little party was attacked in the dead of night by a band of three hundred natives. The forty-two colored auxiliaries promptly took to their heels, leaving the four Englishmen to defend themselves as best they could. Speke, Herne, and Stroyan did deadly work with their revolvers, but Burton had only a sabre. Stroyan fell early in the fight, mortally wounded; Speke received eleven body wounds from which he took no great hurt; but Burton, in sabering his way to the sea, was struck in the face with a javelin, piercing both cheeks and striking out four teeth. Eventually the survivors, bloody and exhausted, but carrying the mutilated body of poor Stroyan, reached a native craft that brought them back to Aden.

Burton's wounds forced him to return to England, and when he landed, the Crimean War was occupying the public mind to the exclusion of all else. Inkerman had been fought, to the glory of the allied arms, in November, and the tedious siege of Sebastopol had begun. Consequently when Burton delivered an account of

his adventures before the Royal Geographical Society, it was accorded but scant notice.

Unwilling to be long away from the scene of action, he set out for the Crimea where he succeeded in obtaining a post on General Beatson's staff. Beatson was a passionate and tactless man, difficult to work with, but a brave and honorable soldier of the old school. Burton had no end of trouble with him, but he accomplished wonders with the regiment of Bashi-Bazouks assigned to him for training. A keen observer of the campaign, he was not long in seeing that the progress of the allied arms would be materially advanced by the relief of Kars, then held by a totally inadequate garrison. Unaware of the secret workings of high diplomacy, he hastened to Lord Stafford, the English Ambassador, with his well conceived plan. That worthy, however, flew into a towering rage, and told him he was "the most impudent man in the Bombay service". Alas, he had not realized that Kars was to be allowed to fall as a peace offering to Russia. As Carlyle said later of the Civil War in America, the Crimean War was "the smoking of the dirty chimney."

Burton's connection with the Army of the Crimea was suddenly ended with the suspension of General Beatson, as a result of the machinations of enemies at home. Thoroughly disgusted, he resigned and returned to England.

Burton's prospects were now far from bright. Malicious gossip and unfortunate official connections had brought him into bad odor. His tactlessness had estranged him from the higher authorities, and even the undisputed fact of his achievements failed to alter their determination to shelve him. His personal character had assumed the blackest hue in the public eye. Loving mothers shuddered at the mention of his name, and a host of grisly stories were circulated about him. True to his nature he not only made no effort to contradict them, but seemed to enjoy posing as a desperate criminal and debauché. One tale, however, he did take pains to refute. Someone circulated the story that he had been caught in a Persian harem, and forced to suffer the penalty usually inflicted upon those who thus infringed on the social etiquette of the Orient. That he may have been caught in a harem is possible,—in view of some of his other escapades—but ample documentary proof exists to convince

even the most biased that he suffered no deprivation of the nature intimated.

While in London, Burton again met Isabel Arundell, quite by accident, in the Botanical Gardens. In fact he met her frequently, "quite by accident," and finally, like the brave soldier in Camoëns, the veteran of so many warlike and amorous adventures, he "fell by a pair of eyes". According to Isabel, Burton made the actual proposal. This is just possible; at least we may give her the benefit of the doubt.

As might be expected, old Mrs. Arundell waxed eloquent in her opposition to the match. From her point of view Richard was hardly a desirable husband. He was not a Catholic, he was a heathen; and he had neither money nor prospects. Isabel defended him valiantly, but to no avail. In desperation she presented him with a medal that had been blessed by the Pope and redoubled the prayers that she had been saying for him for the past four years. Richard obligingly hung the medal about his neck along with the star sapphire, the Brahminical thread and other relics, holy and unholy, that he was now accustomed to wear about his person, and bided his time.

It was now October, 1856, and Burton once more felt the power of the hills upon him. He had long dreamed of the unveiling of Isis, of opening up the mysterious sources of the Nile, then unknown to white men. He finally secured a small grant from the government, and late in the autumn he sailed for Bombay, taking his old friend Lieutenant Speke as assistant. From Bombay they proceeded, in the sloop "Elphinstone", to Zanzibar. Both were in high spirits at the thought of the adventure before them, and the perils of the march were forgotten in their eagerness to conquer unknown lands.

On landing at Zanzibar, the season was found to be unsuitable for the main expedition, and it was decided to make a preliminary trip to Pemba and Mombassa, another haunt of Burton's beloved Camoëns. The trip was successfully accomplished and the little band was back in Zanzibar by the end of May, where both Burton and Speke were taken down with tropical fever, an event they looked upon as a sort of necessary seasoning. During the journey, however, they had made a valuable addition to their party in the person of one Sudy Bombay, a native guide who proved to be a

jewel in the rough, and who many years later, was sought out by Stanley to lead his expedition into the Dark Continent.

By the end of June all was ready, and having added a bag of chestnuts to the medal and the star sapphire, as a precaution against demons, Burton embarked his party on a native craft, landing at Wale Point on June 6, 1857.

Now began a journey that for daring and personal achievement, causes Stanley's later expedition to pale into insignificance. Those who would follow it in detail may do so in Burton's own book—*The Lake Regions of Equatorial Africa*. Let it be remembered that this man plunged alone into the unknown wilderness, with but one white assistant and a little band of treacherous natives. With the most meagre of funds (£1200 at most) cut off from all communication with his kind, without medical assistance other than his own elementary knowledge of therapeutics, Burton successfully accomplished a journey of twenty-one months' duration, through the heart of the tropics, over a distance of more than two thousand miles.

Into the wilderness the little party pushed its way, through swamps and marshes, tropical jungles and clear uplands. Misfortune followed misfortune. The mercenaries became unruly and mutinied, resulting in the summary execution of two of them, it is said by Burton's own hand. They were bitten by the deadly Tsetse fly and tortured by vermin of gargantuan proportions. They passed through Basomoyo, Ugogi, Zungomero, districts inhabited by disease-ridden black savages, to arrive at last at the Arab city of Kazeh, in the land of Unyanyembe. Here Burton halted for a brief rest among the hospitable and well-to-do traders, whom he found leading a sybaritic life with their troops of slaves and concubines, taking their ease in well-watered gardens, and drinking Arabian coffee brought up to them from the sea.

The march had hardly been resumed when Burton was stricken with a partial paralysis and had to be carried; Speke became partially blind. But the worst part of the journey was now over, and on February 13th, 1858, upon climbing to the top of a bit of rising ground, a broad streak of light appeared before them. "Look, Master", cried the faithful Sudy Bombay, "behold the great water". It was Tanganyika, wonder of Central Africa, lying like a bright jewel in its mountain setting.



A month was spent exploring the lake, as far as Ujiji and Uvira, its northernmost extremities, but no northward flowing stream could be found to indicate that it was a feeder of the Nile. Much refreshed by their rest and by the healthful climate of Tanganyika, Burton returned with his party to Kazeh, where he settled down to recuperate and compile his notes and observations.

Here he committed one of the most tragic errors of his life. It was known that a large body of water lay not far to the north, and when Speke asked permission to visit it, Burton, who was enjoying himself with his Arab hosts, allowed him to make the expedition alone. He did so and was back in six weeks. He had discovered Victoria Nyanza, which he at once claimed to be the head-water of the Nile. As it turned out, he was right, although he had no real grounds for his claim, for he saw only its southernmost shore. But he seems completely to have lost his head, and overwhelmed Burton with reproaches for refusing to accept his belief. In fact on the map which Speke presented to the Royal Geographical Society on his return, there appeared a beautiful range of mountains to the north of Nyanza, the "Mountains of the Moon", that his own later explorations proved to be non-existent.

Burton endured his companion's abuse with rare forbearance, and when on the terrible march back to Wale, Speke fell ill with that ghastly disease known as "little irons", he nursed him back to life. Worn with disease and fatigue, they reached Zanzibar on March 4th, 1859.

Again Burton erred disastrously. Instead of returning to England at once, he delayed for a time in Zanzibar. Speke landed two weeks ahead of him, and went straight to the Geographical Society, where he immediately organized a new expedition of which he was to be the head, and in which his old chief was not even mentioned. When Burton appeared the ground was cut completely from under him, and he was greeted coolly at the Society. The treacherous Speke was the lion of the hour. To cap the climax, the consul at Zanzibar actually published the complaints of some of Burton's rascally native followers, and he narrowly escaped a public reprimand. Broken in health and spirit, he sought refuge with his family, now smaller by one, for his father had died while he lay paralysed in Unyanyembe. But in his journal he wrote: "I have built me a monument stronger than brass."